

COLLISION COURSE COMET

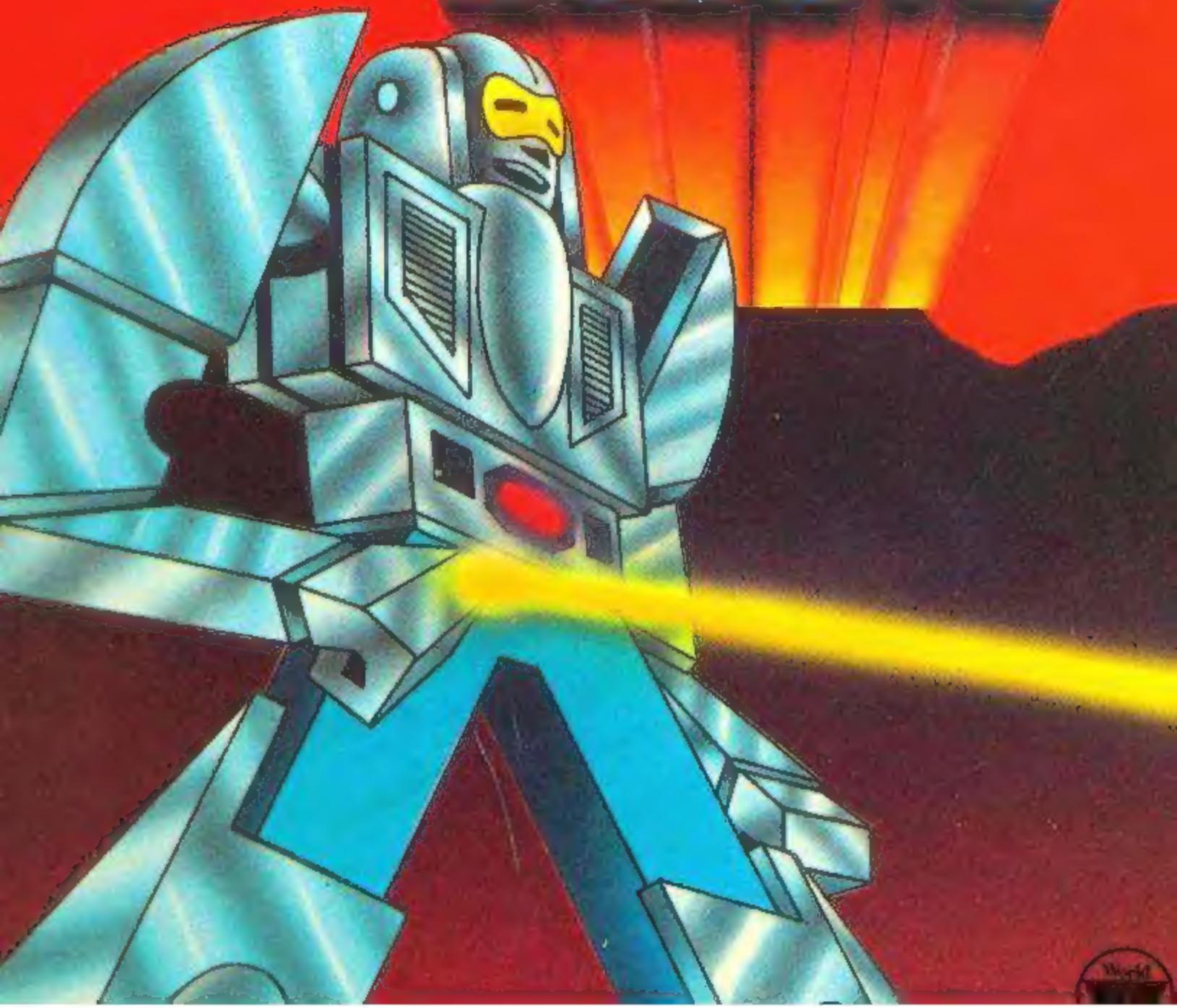
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CHALLENGE  
OF THE

GOBOTS™





# COLLISION COURSE COMET

The night sky above was totally cloudless. It glittered and gleamed with the lights of millions of faraway stars. The scientists at the Observatory just outside ASC base had hoped for a night like this. They had hours of hard but exciting work ahead of them. Comet Halley had returned!

The entire team of astronomers and scientists stood grouped together outside, so it caused just a little surprise when a pair of glaring headlights was seen coming up the road that led to the Observatory.

"Who could that be?" asked one of the men. "I thought everyone was here already."

His question was answered straight away. The lights, seeming to blaze even brighter, began to

move slowly in the direction of the scientists. Then, accompanied by the deafening roar of a sports car engine running flat out, they launched themselves down the gravel approach road and leapt straight at the white-coated men.

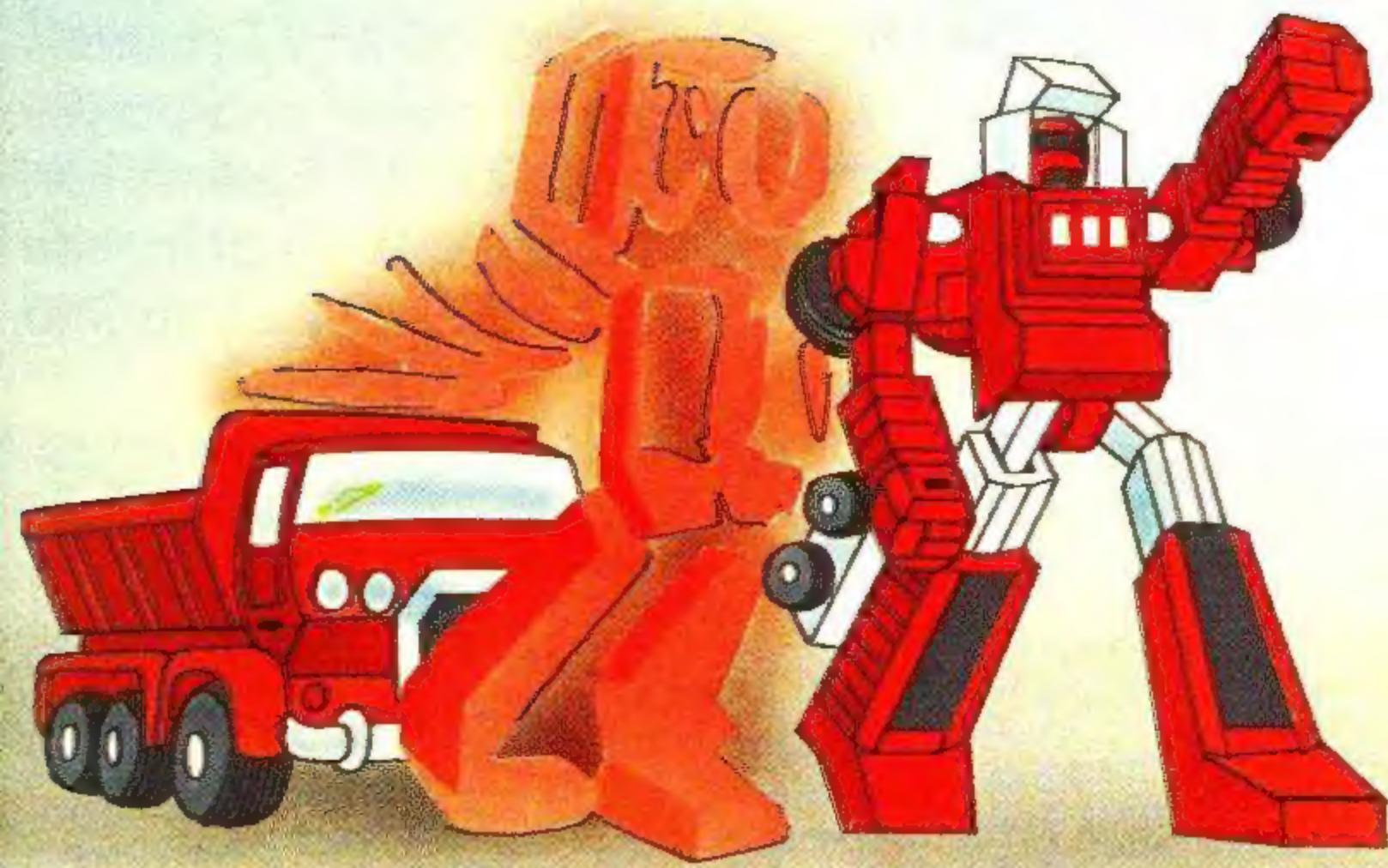
Scientists yelled and shouted. They threw themselves out of the way of the screaming sports car as its wheels sprayed dust and gravel in all directions. It was Crasher. "Yeee – ihh!" yelled the driverless car, and threw out its rear wheels in delight.

"Crashing and bashing, it really is smashing!" laughed Crasher as she turned to take another run at the unfortunate astronomers.

But as she made ready to mow down as many as she could, she let out a mighty screech and drew up short for, straddling the drive and blocking her way, was a huge, yellow dump truck.

"Blast!" screamed Crasher. "You're not going to ruin my fun!"

"Oh, but I am," replied the mechanical voice of the truck, and immediately it began to bend its shape into that of the powerful GoBot-dumper.



The sports car veered away, throwing up a cloud of dust and gravel, and fled down the road, but as she did so her curved sports car lines twisted into those of the GoBot they had disguised. The turbo units in her metal feet blasted into action and Crasher shot into the air like a bullet.

The GoBot-dumper was ready for action, and as he saw the Renegade take off, he fired two quick power beams in her direction. The first one missed by

a gnat's tail; but the second ground into Crasher's great arm, causing her to reel in anger and panic.

Crasher decided that the odds were against her. As the GoBot-dumper prepared to fire again, she slipped into full speed mode and disappeared into the glittering night sky.

The GoBot-dumper watched the Renegade go. "Good riddance!" it muttered as it settled down among the stunned astronomers.

Matt, the daring pilot from the ASC who had been inside the GoBot-dumper during its little adventure, greeted the scientists.

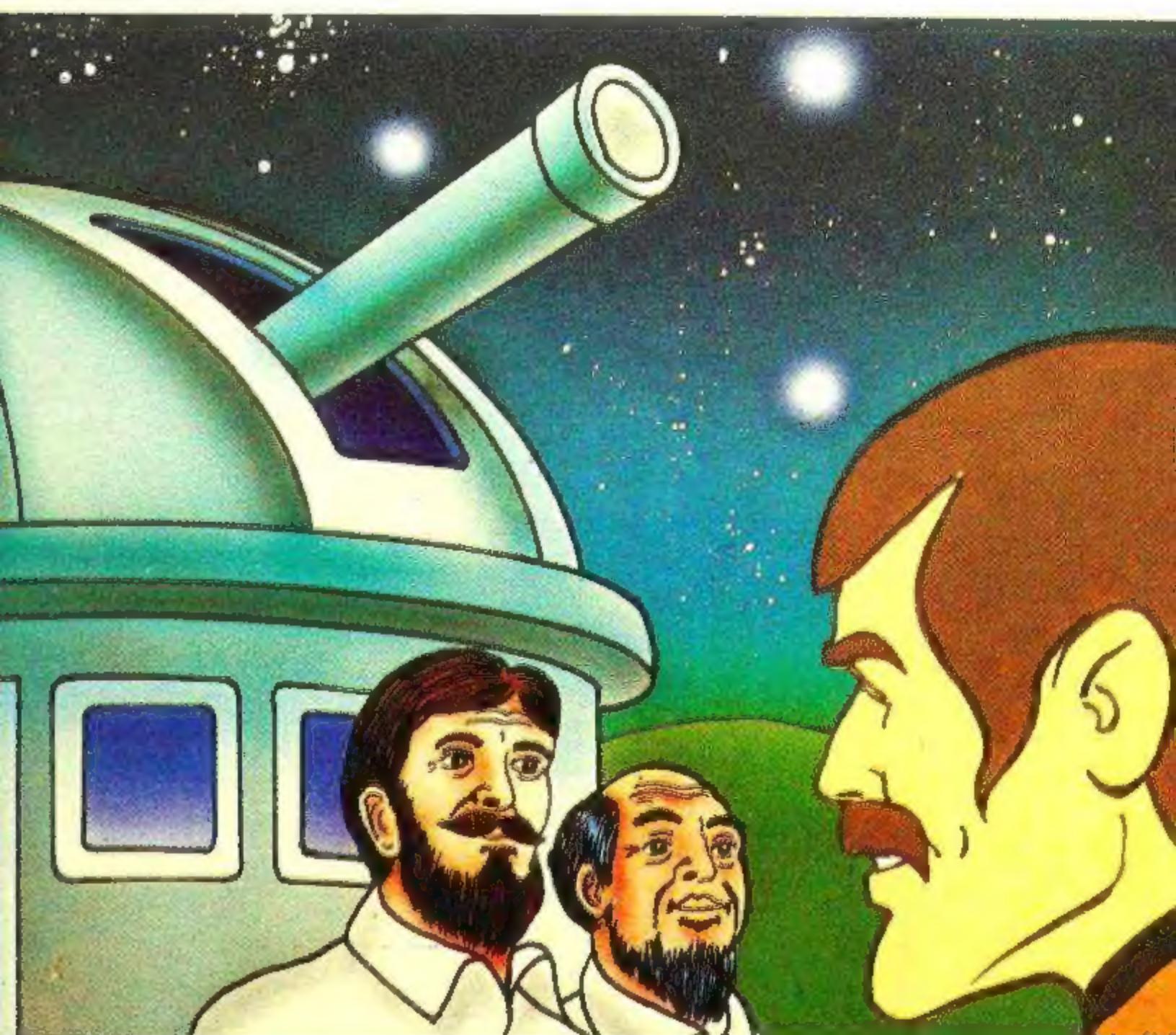
"Good evening, gentlemen," he smiled. "I trust no one was hurt – although you all look as shaken as a milkshake."

"I'm not surprised!" returned the Chief Astronomer. "What on earth provoked that attack? Who would want to harm us, for Pete's sake?"

Matt shook his head. "You are very knowledgeable men. Perhaps someone thinks your knowledge is dangerous!"

The astronomer shrugged. "It's odd though!

Tonight's a special night, you see. Tonight we will observe Comet P/Halley – or Halley's Comet, as you like to call it, on the latest of its very infrequent visits close to earth. We are hoping to increase our knowledge even further."

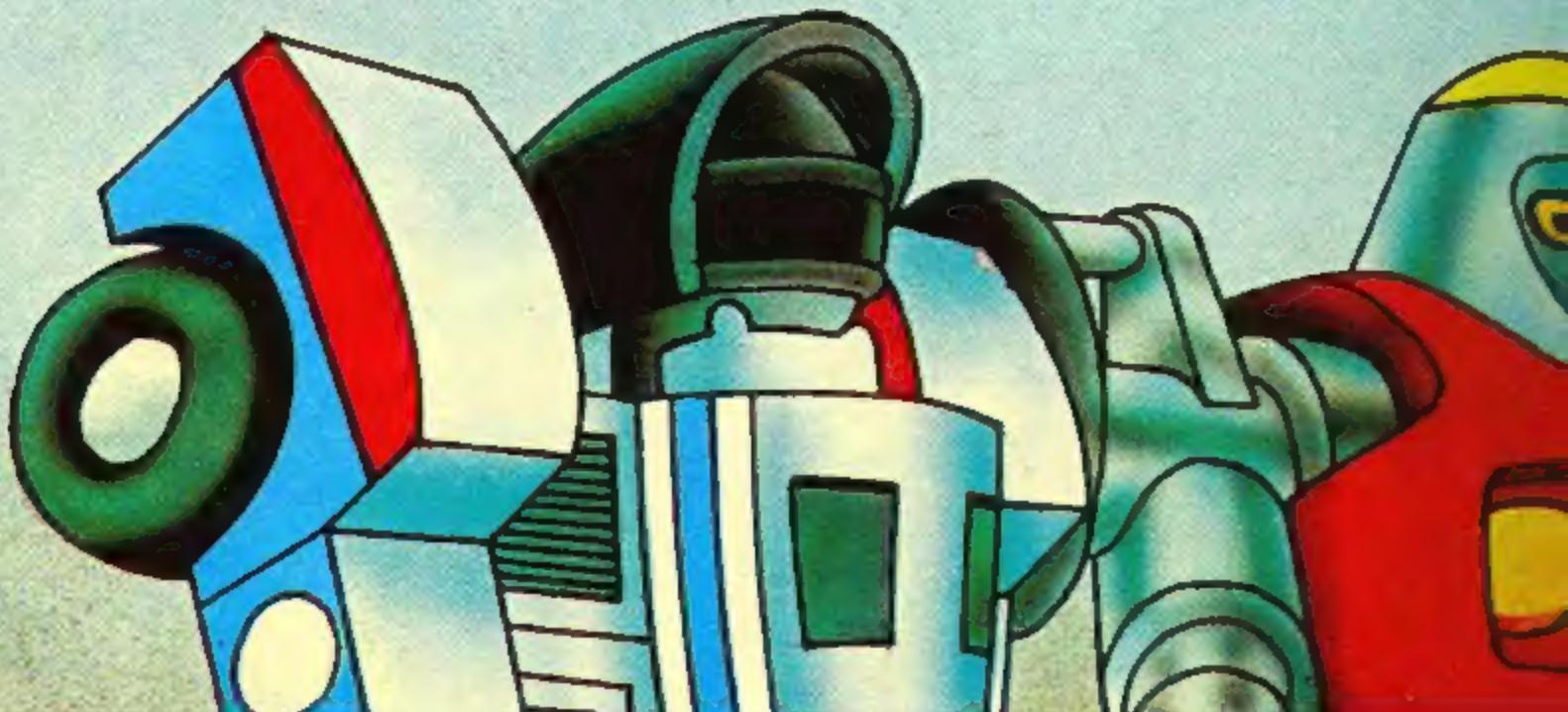


"Yes, I know a fair bit about the comet," said Matt. "It returns to orbit the sun once every 76 years or so. That means the last time it was here the GoBots weren't around, so life must have been much quieter. How things have changed!"

The GoBot-dumper's voice sounded a little hurt. "We're not all Renegades, you know. Some of us make quite good dump trucks," he said.

Matt and the scientists laughed their agreement.

Meanwhile, Crasher had returned to Thruster, the Renegade spacecraft hide-out. She was greeted by a very bad tempered Cy-Kill.



"Well," barked the Renegade leader, "what have you got to offer me? What tit-bits of useful information do you have? Or have you been playing again, as I suspect."

Crasher sneered. "Humans! What do they know? Weak and stupid! My sensors have picked up nothing of importance. The scientists at the Observatory are too busy studying a ridiculous comet to be doing anything important."

Dr Braxis, who had been standing quietly behind



Cy-Kill, stepped forward. "What did you say – a comet? Hmm. That's Halley's Comet. A missile from the outer reaches of the solar system. Not really of much importance to . . ."

" . . . Not important?" interrupted Cy-Kill. "Any missile is important if it can be used against earth!"

"Use it against earth?" questioned Dr Braxis, in total disbelief. "But how? It will destroy the planet."

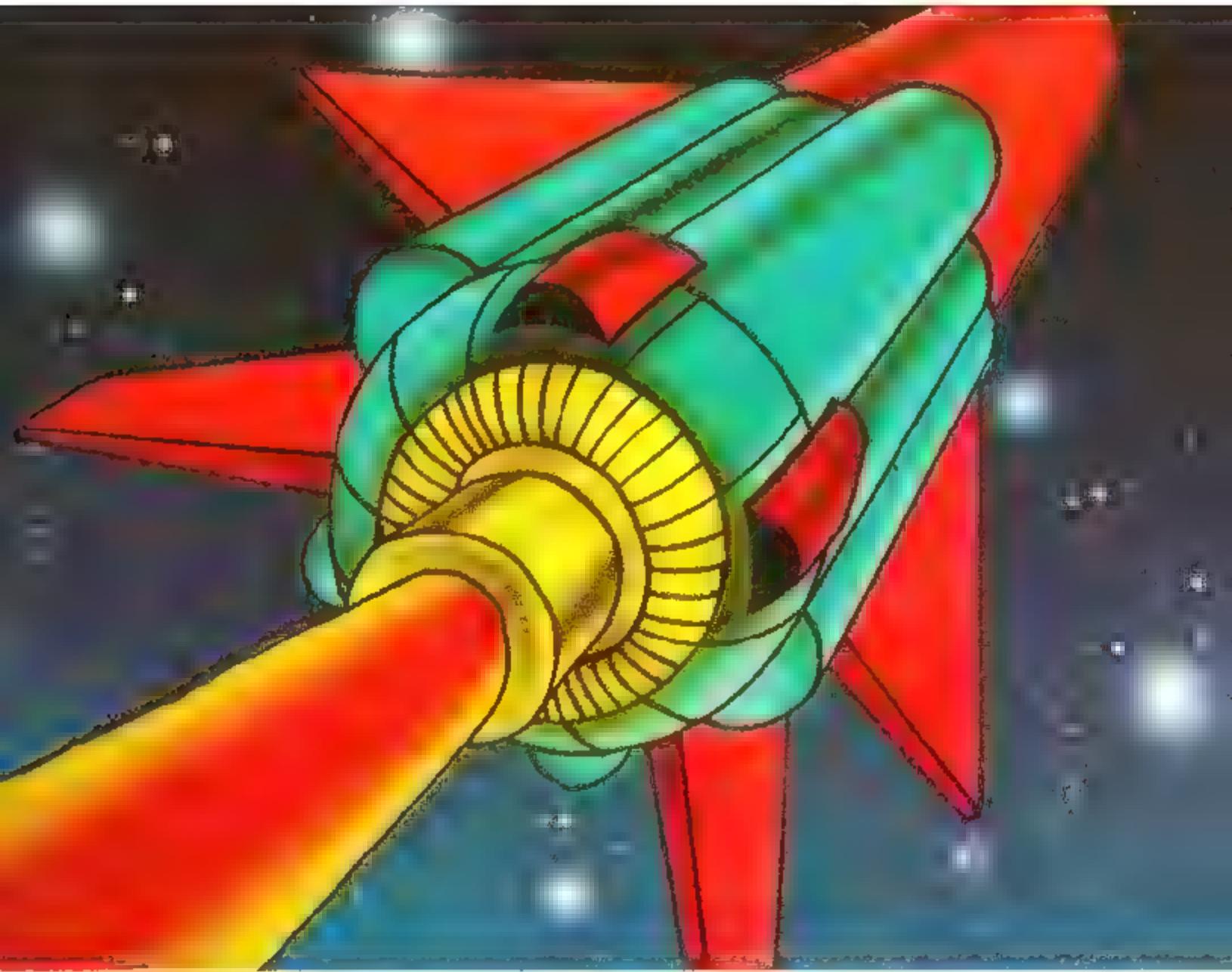
"So?" hissed Cy-Kill. "Crasher, you remember the Mixafon gravity component? It's a very powerful tool, and I have a brilliant idea, if we can get our hands on it."

Cy-Kill went to work quickly. The powerful frame of Thruster almost shuddered as hyperdrive was engaged and proceeded to race half way across the galaxy.

The planet Mixafon loomed up on the video screen of Thruster's control room.

"We'll land in seconds," beamed Cy-Kill, "and the component will be ours."

"The Mixafon council will not disappoint us," taunted Crasher. "I'm sure they remember our last visit . . ."



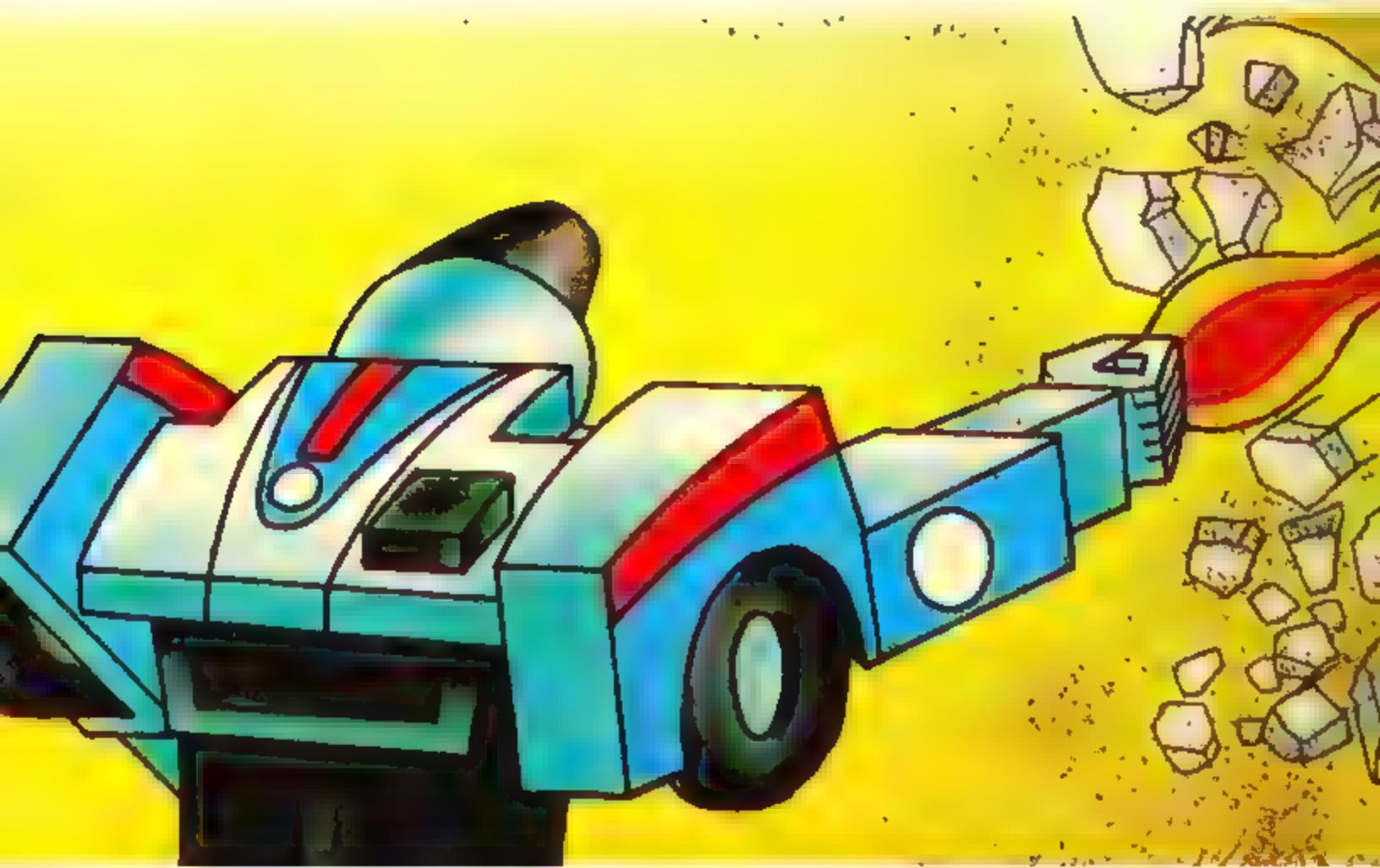
"And so you see," said Cy-Kill to the little band of Mixafon councillors some hours later, "we are here to take your gravity component straight away!"

"But sir," objected the Chief Councillor, "you know that we have just one component. And no one alive on Mixafon has the knowledge to create another. Those who did are long since dead."

"Enough!" screamed Crasher. "We don't have time to discuss this." And with that she aimed a power beam at the beautifully painted council chamber, bringing a wall crumbling and crashing to the ground in a swirl of plaster and dust.

The councillors looked in horror at the remains of one of their most prized works of art.

"Alright," sighed the Chief Councillor, "the component is yours. We have no army to defend ourselves. You saw to that the last time you came here!"



So, having loaded the component on board Thruster, the Renegades returned to earth's solar system, bent upon causing havoc with the help of Halley's Comet.

Back at the Observatory, Matt and his colleague A.J. watched through the huge reflecting telescope and wondered just what sort of view they would get of the newly arrived comet.

"That comet's got a tail millions of kilometres long," said Matt.



"Hmm, and its head is made of ice dust and gas – like somebody else I know!"

"Very funny," grinned Matt as he peered through the eye piece. "Now, there she is. And on the right co-ordinates."

Matt and A.J. continued to plot the path of the comet as the night wore on. Everything was normal. Until just after one in the morning . . .



. . . for at that precise time Halley's Comet began to shift in a most extraordinary way. It moved off the path it had travelled for thousands of years and began to travel in a new direction!

"Matt, that comet has gone mad," A.J. said in a worried voice.

"Not only that," exclaimed Matt, "but it's dangerous. If it continues on that orbit my guess is that it'll collide with earth!"

At ASC headquarters all was in turmoil. How could the comet have changed direction? Nothing close to it could have created enough gravitational pull. Then over the intercommunications system a Renegade voice broke out and everyone's worst fears were realized.

"And so," finished Cy-Kill, "if you do not surrender to us immediately, Halley's Comet will destroy you! Decide your fate. Oh, and the gravity component is not on board Thruster. You'll never find it!"

A.J. and Matt stared at each other.

"He's infiltrated the audio system," said Matt. "Keep him talking, A.J., I've got an idea."

Matt slipped away from the ASC control centre and lodged himself in his own computer room. Quickly he calculated just how much the comet had moved off course, its speed and its distance from earth – a brilliant piece of mathematical deduction.

"That's it," he said defiantly. "I think I know where they've got the gravity component."

Leaving A.J. to argue with Cy-Kill, Matt hurried off to the GoBot-shuttle, the only Guardian who could assist with his plans.



The ASC cadet hoisted himself into the mighty GoBot's control cockpit and in an instant they were hurtling into space.

"You're right, Sir." The GoBot-shuttle's voice came through the audio network. "There it is – the gravity component."

"Yes," whispered Matt. "And with only Crasher on guard. She's no match for you in space."

In answer the GoBot-shuttle winked and, swinging into his GoBot shape, he ripped past Crasher at an incredible speed.

"Bash you and dash you!" screamed the Renegade, as she fired bout after bout of power beams at her enemy, all of which flashed past him harmlessly.

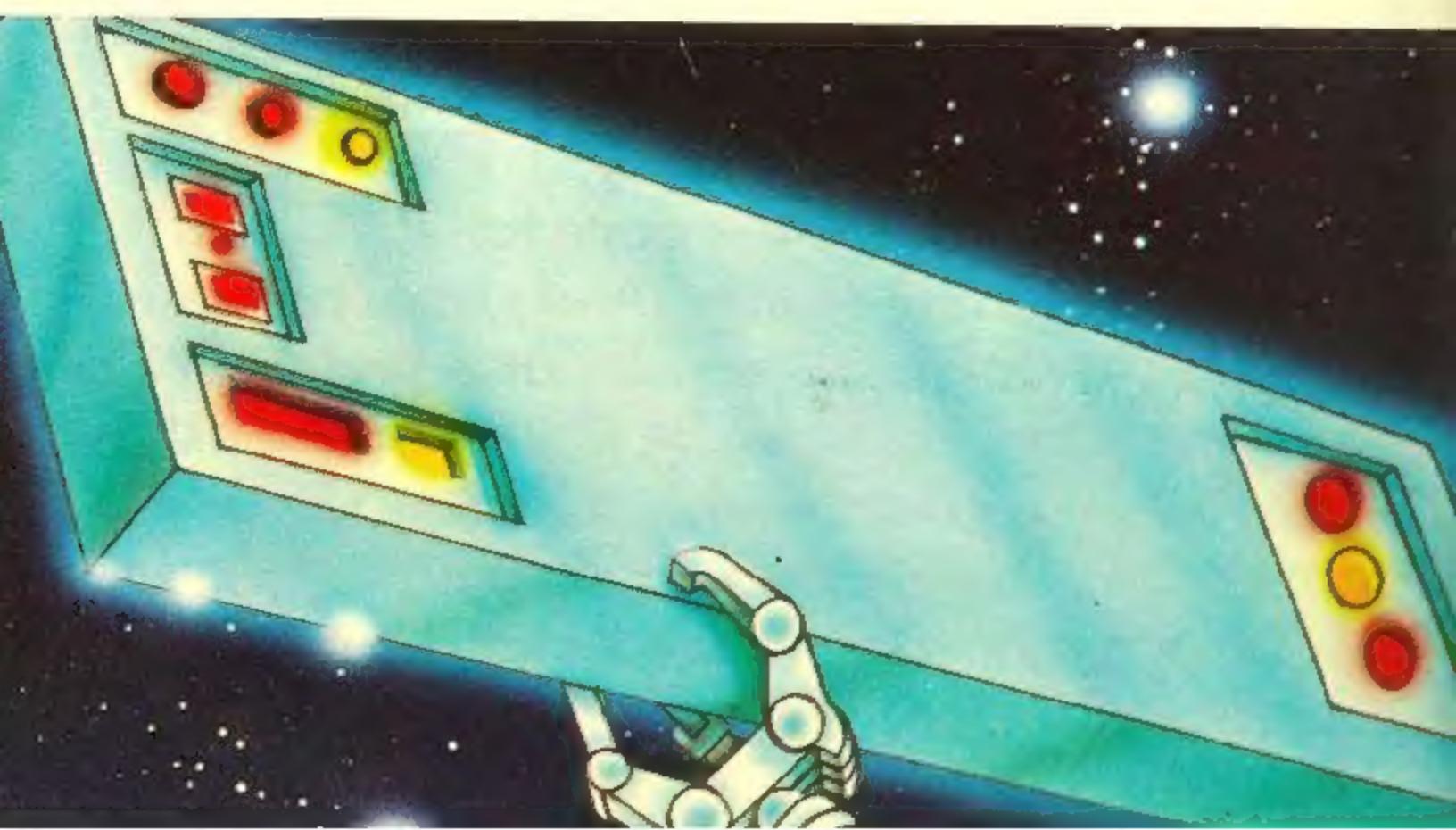
"I'm much too quick and agile for you in space," bellowed the GoBot-shuttle. "And just as powerful." With that he feinted this way and that until the Renegade didn't know where to turn. Two blasts of his well-aimed power beams later and Crasher fled, grey smoke curling from a damaged grappler.

"Good, good," commended Matt, "but our work is not over."

Several hyperdrive minutes later the shuttle had placed the gravity component in space again, its controls adjusted to a new task.

Just a little while after that, observers of Halley's Comet watched it change orbit again and return to its original path around the sun.

A.J., who had spent the last hours pleading for mercy, heard a cry of anger from the evil Cy-Kill, and then silence. She knew that Matt and the GoBot-shuttle had triumphed, and in doing so had saved earth – and Halley's Comet – from a collision course.





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